

Oak Middle School Happenings

SHREWSBURY



“Respect is Our Cornerstone”

April 2005

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Principals’ Corner

The weeks prior to the April vacation were event filled ones. We were extremely pleased that all seventh grade students were in attendance on April 6th to participate in the MCAS Composition assessment. The next round of MCAS assessments will take place as referenced on the schedule on the next page. Once again we respectfully request that your child be particularly well rested and at their best on the dates they are scheduled to participate in their grade level MCAC tests.

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PTO President’s Corner

Every event sponsored by the PTO takes the coordination and effort of a few individuals behind the scene to make it successful. The PTO Board would like to thank some of the individuals who have made this year an overwhelming success.

Open House: Andrea Burns and Ronnie Riedel welcomed in the school year for parents and students by coordinating volunteers, campus maps and schedules to make everyone feel comfortable on the first few days of school.

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(Principals' Corner, continued from page 1)

Date	Grade 7		Date	Grade 8
May 16 th	Gr 7 Math Question Tryouts		May 16 th	Gr 8 Science/ Technology Ed
May 17 th	Gr 7 History Question Tryouts		May 17 th	Gr 8 Science/ Technology Ed
May 23 rd	Gr 7 Language Arts/Literature Practice		May 23 rd	Gr 8 Math Practice
May 24 th	Grade 7 Language Arts/Literature		May 24 th	Gr 8 Math
May 25 th	Gr 7 Language Arts/Literature		May 25 th	Gr 8 Math
May 26 th	MCAS Make up Day		May 26 th	MCAS Make up Day
May 27 th	MCAS Make up Day		May 27 th	MCAS Make up Day

We also encourage you to take a look at last year's students' English Language Arts (grade 7) and Mathematics (grade 8) MCAS performance included separately in this Monday' folder. We are pleased that student Cycle III ratings were "Very High" for ELA and "High" in Math. Improvement Ratings for Cycle III in both areas were "On Target". We continue to work in the Math area where we did not meet the targets for performance and improvement among our special education students. We are hopeful that our classroom instruction and after school "Learning How to Learn" programs will evidence the improvement need in student performance assessed this year.

We would also like to take this opportunity to say thanks to the current seventh grade parents who attended our Orientation program on March 31st. In the weeks ahead, eighth grade ambassadors will visit seventh grade classrooms to provide some "tips for success in eighth grade" as well as respond to seventh grade students' questions. Please note that we are currently working with the administration of Shrewsbury High School to provide an orientation program for incoming 9th graders

prior to the end of the current school year as well.

Parents who would like to pass along specific information on your child's learning style or needs as you perceive them for **grade eight team placement** are welcome to do so by directing e-mail or regular mail to next year's grade 8 Counselor Kristin Minio. Requests for specific teams are not invited and will not be honored nor will friendship placement requests. We request that your information be sent by Friday, May 13th. Team placement information will be mailed home with the final report cards in July after the close of the current school year.

Several parents have inquired about the grading format at the Oak Middle School next year. All seventh and eighth grade students will continue to receive letter grades for the 2005-06 school year. Steering Committee work has been initiated this year, and formal work will be undertaken next year to move toward a standards-based progress reporting format beginning with the 2006-07 school year. Our goal is to define a format that has meaning to parents, students, teachers and corresponds to the needs of our High School.

The week prior to the April vacation was dubbed "Spirit Week" – an idea generated by grade eight teacher Tim Kewriga and embraced by the whole school community. The week included student participation in "Twins", "Dress-up/Dress-Down", "Favorite Teams", "Team Color" and "School Color" days. The culmination of the week took place Friday afternoon with a whole school assembly in the gym featuring the boys and girls finals of the 3 on 3 basketball tournament, individual student basketball skills exhibitions, as well as Boys and Girls OMS basketball teams vs., the Staff. The respectful, responsible, learning focused behavior of our students all week long was not surprising but truly remarkable! This event was another powerful reminder of the strong sense of community that has evolved at OMS this year. Your support for our efforts has been a significant part in what has been realized!

Upon our return from vacation we are pleased to welcome Grade 7 White, English Language Arts Teacher Peg Holdash back from her “Trek to Nepal”. Peg’s detailed accounts of her adventure and first hand satellite-assisted phone calls made us feel very much a part of her journey. The school community will continue to benefit from Peg’s experience in the days ahead. A symbolic representation of the journey will soon appear in the main entrance of the school in the form of the OMS logo banner which was included in the “necessities” taken to Mount Everest.

In closing, we would like to suggest you stay current with the school budget issues (the final budget will be presented to the Town Meeting on May 16th), take note of the 7 White Dance & More (gymnasium activities) on the 29th of April, the May 6th PTO dance (student pick-up by 9:45 p.m. for both events), consider attending the Shrewsbury Elementary and Middle Schools Art Festival at Sherwood Middle School on Saturday, April 30th from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., and note the other special events on the calendar attached to this issue of the Happenings. The next issue that will be sent home at the end of May will include all yet to be finalized events for the month of June. We look forward to working with you to maintain a learning focused finish to the 2004-05 school year!

Steve Lobban
Pam Farrill
Beth Schaper

(PTO President’s Corner, continued from page 1)

Entertainment Book: Mindy McKenzie-Hebert kicked off our fundraising efforts with this Fall Fundraiser, coordinating and organizing a large group of parent volunteers. Her efforts helped raise over \$36,000.

Directory: Mary Garrity, Hadar Hawk and Kathy Brand put together the first annual Middle School Directory. This publication was well received, and one that continually gets used throughout the year.

5/6 Socials: Linda Gadilauskas has orchestrated several social events for our Sherwood students. From the Halloween Party to the Disco Party, the theme has been fun, and the enjoyment by the students has been high. She is now in the process of putting together a Sherwood stage production.

7/8 Socials: Linda Jodrie has overcome countless construction issues, time changes and schedule changes to make each dance an enjoyable event for our Oak students.

Magazine Drive: Joanne Hubbard, Kathy Hale and Lisa Clark coordinated a large group of parent volunteers to assist with this Spring Fundraiser, achieving over \$96,000 in sales, of which approximately \$36,000 is profit for the middle schools.

Family Group Events: Mary Pritchard and Helen Hummer gave students and parents a chance to spend time together by organizing events to the Worcester Ice Cats and IMAX Theater.

Staff Hospitality: Sue Pacy has been working “under the radar” to coordinate a group of volunteers who acknowledge our school staff periodically throughout the year with baked goods.

Staff Luncheon: Although this event will occur in June, Janice Rezuks and Kelly Marcimo return to bring flair and festivity to the Staff Luncheon. Last year’s event received tremendous reviews, and this year promises to be just as good.

Publicity: Maria Sheehan is the link between the school community and the media. She has orchestrated many “photo opportunities” by the local media to highlight our students and schools.

As each Chairperson above would tell you, their jobs are made easier because of the teams of people on their committees. If you see any of these individuals, or any of their team members, please take the time to thank them for making

this a special year for all of our students, parents and school staff.

To all of these individuals, THANK YOU!!!

Michael Brand
PTO President

School Council News

The School Council will present its evaluation of the 200405 School Improvement Plan and highlights of the 2005-06 Plan to the School Committee this Wednesday evening, April 27th. These plans in their entirety can be accessed on our school website at <http://www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/schools/Oak>.

Oak Middle School School Improvement Plan Highlights

2004-05 Accomplishments

Curriculum Assessment and Instruction

Curriculum Coordinators Barbara Swidler, Cindy Wilson, Ann Jones, Anne Wentzell, Special Education Coordinator Ann Gustafson, Assistant Principals Beth Schaper and Pam Farrill collaborated to develop:

- an Academic Support Program held during the day, administered by a teacher aide
- a tuition based “Learning How to Learn” after school program
- a middle level specific Strategies for Effective Teaching course
- a Special Education instructional delivery model connecting students, teachers and parents for two consecutive years beginning next year

Professional Development

- full implementation of electronic grading
- increased development of interdisciplinary units of instruction

Respectful Community

- Creating the Channel 34, Middle School News Network in partnership with the PTO, has taken the community inside the Oak Middle School to celebrate students’ academic, athletic, musical and creative accomplishments.
- There has been a significant reduction in discipline reports this year.

School Space

- The full instructional program was delivered yearlong overcoming the challenges faced in “compressed occupancy”.

2005-06 Improvement Targets

Curriculum Assessment and Instruction

- Raise the “academic bar” in the areas of English Language Arts, Math, Science/Technology and Social Studies.

Professional Development

- All school-based portions of Professional Development Days will be dedicated to our Standards-based work.

Respectful Community

- Develop plans that allow each student to experience a trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school community; feel that their school is physically and emotionally safe; and have an opportunity to display their unique talents or interests

School Space

- Continue to advocate for completion of the building project.

Your School Council representatives have served you and your children well this year. Once again their names appear on the next page to assist you or should you have an opportunity to express your appreciation for their service.

Oak Middle School Council Members 2004-2005

Name	Title	Address	Phone	E-Mail
Steve Lobban	Administrator	Oak Middle School	508-841-1210	slobban@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us
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* *new council member*